

REMARKS

Claims 1-37 are pending in this application. Reconsideration and allowance in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested. It is believed that this Response is fully responsive to the Office Action dated October 2, 2001.

As To The Merits:

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner maintains the following rejections:

claims 1-27, 31, 32, 36 and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 based on **Watanabe** (U.S. Patent No. 5,717,776) in view of **Sukegawa et al.** (U. S. Patent No. 5,235,165); and

claims 28-30, 33, 34 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 based on **Watanabe** in of **Sukegawa et al.** and **Bradley et al.** (U.S. Patent No. 5,771,071).

Both of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

With regard to Applicants' arguments that Watanabe and Sukegawa fail to disclose, singly or in combination, a passport data input unit for inputting the contents of an issued passport as data, as set forth in claims 4 and 5, the Examiner takes the following position:

Examiner is not persuaded that this failure renders any of Applicant's claims nonobvious, taking into consideration that Watanabe does disclose inputting the contents of an issued driver's license as data (column 4, lines 30-35; column 12, lines 26-30). Driver's licenses and passports are both identification documents; what is anticipated for one is held to be obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art for the other.¹

However, it is respectfully submitted that the contents of an issued passport are quite different from that of a driver's license.

Thus, it is respectfully asserted that Watanabe and Sukegawa fail to disclose, singly or in combination, *a passport data input unit for inputting the contents of an issued passport as data*, as set forth in claims 4 and 15.

In addition, with regard to the Applicants' arguments that the applied references do not disclose issuing a passport on a later day, as now set forth in amended claim 6. The reasons for issuing a passport may be failure of the device, end of stock of new passports, etc. The effects are: no need to wait till the procedure completes, no need to carry the passport (no chance to loose the passport), the Examiner takes the following position:

¹/Please see, line 16, page 27 through line 2, page 28 of the outstanding Action.

Again, Examiner is not persuaded that the deficiency of the cited prior art to disclose the precise limitation claimed makes the claim or claims nonobvious. As set forth in the rejection of claim 6 (*vide supra*), it is known to make a good or service available on a later day (as in layaway plans), and Examiner believes that it is also old and well known not to issue a passport until some days after payment of the passport application fee, and the meting of other requirements (because, *inter alia*, U.S. passports were not physically prepared at most of the sites where they were applied for, but required time to prepare and transport.²

However, the Examiner's reliance on a layaway plan for an issued passport is unsupported, since layaway plans include multiple payments from a customer, which is not required in the present claimed invention.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the applied references do not disclose *issuing a passport on a later day*, as set forth in amended claim 6.

Thus, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully asserted that the prior art fails to teach or suggest recitations of claims 1-37, and request that the Examiner allow these claims, along with the entire application, to issue. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-37 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully solicited.

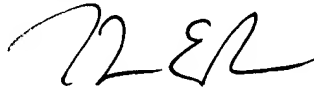
If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney, at the telephone number indicated below, to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

^{2/}Please see, lines 4-11, page 28 of the outstanding Action.

In the event this response is not timely filed, Applicants petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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